



Introduction — Earthquakes and Sinkholes

An earthquake is a sudden, rapid shaking of a region of the earth's surface caused by the breaking and shifting of rock beneath the earth's surface. Although many people think of California as "earthquake country," all fifty states are vulnerable to earthquakes.

It's important to be aware of what to do during an earthquake. Most of the injuries that occur during earthquakes are due to falling walls, shattering glass, or falling furniture, not from the actual movement of the earth itself.

This chapter contains information from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) about what you can do during an earthquake to protect yourself and your family. There are also preventive measures you can take around your home before an earthquake occurs to help reduce the likelihood of injury.

Sinkholes are a geological hazard more likely to affect the Southeast U.S. Sinkholes can swallow entire homes or they can be small funnel shapes, a foot in diameter, that disappear into the ground. Sinkholes can cause property damage and entrap incautious animals or people.

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